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Chairman: Mr. Fernandez ..... (Honduras)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 86: Sustainable development and international economic cooperation (*continued*)

(d) High-level dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership
(A/C.2/57/L.15)

1. **Mr. Vallenilla** (Venezuela) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.15 concerning item 86 (d) on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He noted that the draft resolution was an outcome of the Monterrey Consensus and one of the most important draft resolutions submitted in that context.

Agenda item 88: Operational activities for development (A/57/3, Supplement No. 3 (Part II), A/57/125, A/57/155, A/57/332, A/57/444; A/C.2/57/3)

Agenda item 43: Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children

2. **Ms. Sandler** (UNIFEM) said that the inclusion of gender equality among the Millennium Development Goals represented an extraordinary victory for women and for nations and that women's equality was a prerequisite for attaining all the Millennium Development Goals. Although those goals represented opportunities, many women were affected by regional and national conflicts and by HIV/AIDS. UNIFEM was therefore developing targeted programmes based on partnerships with Governments, civil society and the organizations of the United Nations system.

3. In the area of economic security and rights, UNIFEM was helping women producers to expand their links to markets by using information and communication technologies. It was also supporting a technical resources network for small and micro-enterprises in the Arab States, a forum for South Asian women entrepreneurs, and a network of Peruvian and Ecuadorian artisan women. Furthermore, UNIFEM was encouraging women to work together to influence the proceedings and outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society.

4. Its partnerships with UNDP, UNHCR and ILO had been essential to its strategy in support of women's leadership in Afghanistan. In Timor-Leste, UNIFEM had cooperated with the United Nations Transitional Administration to promote women's political participation and 268 women had stood for office as a result.

5. UNIFEM had signed a memorandum of understanding with UNAIDS in order to address the gender issues related to strategies of combating HIV/AIDS. Through its Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, UNIFEM had been able to provide more than US$5 million in grants to initiatives in 70 countries. These funds had also enabled UNIFEM to convene up to nine United Nations agencies every year to engage in collective learning processes with a view to ending violence against women.

6. **Mrs. Sham Poo** (UNICEF) noted that the special session of the General Assembly on children had reminded the international community that it could not solve effectively the great problems besetting the world unless it placed the needs and rights of children at the centre of international cooperation and national development. To that end, Governments had agreed to work with civil society and with children to prepare action plans by the end of 2003 to reduce poverty, promote healthy lives, provide basic education, protect children against abuse, exploitation and violence, and combat HIV/AIDS. It was gratifying that several countries in the Asia-Pacific region, Latin America and the Caribbean had already prepared such programmes of action to implement the goals set out in the outcome document of the special session entitled "A World Fit for Children" (WFFC). UNICEF would cooperate with the Committee on the Rights of the Child to ensure close linkage at country level between implementation of the WFFC Declaration and the principles stated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As the world's lead agency for children, UNICEF was resolved to play its part in the follow-up to the special session and had provided specific guidance to its country offices and national committees to that effect. It was also preparing a guidance note for Member States and hoped to share it with the Second Committee shortly.

7. In developing countries, UNICEF would implement the WFFC declaration through cooperation programmes based on the five priorities of its medium-term strategic plan: integrated early childhood development, immunization, girls' education, protection of children and fighting HIV/AIDS. Building on the outcome of the Monterrey Conference,

UNICEF would also request donors and the international community to provide the resources necessary for improving the situation of children. For example, UNICEF was working to ensure that countries in sub-Saharan Africa would give high priority to children under the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). It should nevertheless be noted that those countries would not attain any of the Millennium Development Goals or of the WFFC goals unless they first tackled the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the discrimination that was both its cause and its consequence. In the United Nations system, the follow-up to the special session was being handled by the United Nations Development Group and by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). At the country level, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the poverty reduction strategy papers were facilitating inter-agency collaboration, inter alia with the Bretton Woods institutions.

8. **Mr. Zhou** (Special Unit for Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries, United Nations Development Programme) said that the report before the Committee (A/57/155) had been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/202, which dealt with technical cooperation among developing countries. It reviewed the outcomes of all meetings held on the subject from the Buenos Aires Conference of 1978, which had set the general framework of technical cooperation among developing countries, to the Havana South Summit of 2000 and its Programme of Action, which was regarded as the most significant and elaborate agenda so far for cooperation among developing countries and collaboration with developed countries. While the developing countries had stepped up their efforts to implement the South-South cooperation agenda, there was a need for improved coordination of efforts at the national, regional and international levels.

9. For their part, the donor countries had become more active in supporting South-South cooperation initiatives and had thereby brought about stronger ownership and partnership and had a greater impact on development cooperation. The report confirmed that the United Nations system remained an important facilitator of South-South cooperation. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for example, was focusing more on facilitating the sharing of best practices and lessons learned among countries. Those efforts were, however, still insufficient and there was a general lack of awareness of the role of South-South cooperation in poverty reduction, food security, conflict resolution, peace and human security and other development goals set in the Millennium Declaration.

10. Based on those findings, the report set out 10 recommendations aimed at consolidating South-South cooperation and giving a fresh impetus to triangular cooperation.

11. **Mr. D'Angelo** (Development Cooperation Policy Branch) introduced the report on pledging mechanisms to fund operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/57/332). At the time of the triennial review of operational activities for development which had taken place in 2001, delegations had expressed divergent views on the usefulness of the annual United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities. The report had been prepared in close collaboration with Member States and United Nations funds and programmes in order to take detailed account of the different views on the subject, and the Secretariat had waited for the conclusions of the operational activities for development segment of the Economic and Social Council in July 2002 to complete the report.

12. The report (A/57/332) was based on the idea that if operational activities for development were to help to bring about a more peaceful and more prosperous world, contributions to the regular resources would have to be considerably increased. Since its creation in 1977, the pledging mechanism had not achieved all of its goals since it had not succeeded in mobilizing the political support of the main donors. Even though it was still too early to draw conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the multi-year funding frameworks, several donors had shown a certain interest in those modalities. The report studied new means of mobilizing the necessary resources for operational activities for development and suggested that regular events should be organized to facilitate the mobilization of resources, including regular resources, the aim being to increase the various sources of funding available to the Organization. When making their choice, delegations would have to ensure that the modality or modalities they chose were of political interest and took account of the needs of all United Nations bodies.

13. **Mr. Carpio Govea** (Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that in the past 10 years the world context in which the United Nations system operated had changed under the effects of globalization, a phenomenon which, while it opened up prospects, also gave rise to new difficulties, particularly for the developing countries. The gap between poor and rich countries had grown wider as a result of the reduction in official development assistance (ODA) and the decline or stagnation of multilateral cooperation. A world consensus had emerged around quantified and dated development goals. The International Conference on Financing for Development, a major step forward in that area, had demonstrated the determination of the international community to address the difficulties concerning development financing, but the proposals that had been made were far from being sufficient to meet the needs of the developing countries, above all the least developed countries.

14. The task of United Nations bodies, too, was becoming more arduous since they must react to the economic and social effects of globalization and promote national development by helping the developing countries to become integrated into the world economy. The Group of 77 and China had always thought that operational activities for development were the main focus of the United Nations with regard to development and had therefore always taken a great interest in their conception and implementation. They considered that the United Nations system should promote the coherence and coordination of such activities and of responses that were adapted to the national priorities of the beneficiary countries. Since Governments were responsible for coordinating external aid and development activities, it was important to ensure their participation in all phases — from conception to evaluation — in order to enable them to exercise control over programmes and projects.

15. Poverty elimination must remain a pillar of operational activities for development. Appropriate policies, increased institutional capacities and sufficient assistance from the international community could contribute rapidly and substantially to the elimination of poverty. The United Nations system had a special role to play in that area, particularly as regards capacity-building. Unfortunately, the current outlook did not seem promising. Efforts to eliminate poverty were being jeopardized by the decline in multilateral assistance and the lack of national resources. There was an urgent need for action on every level. At the international level, it was necessary to mobilize sufficient financial and technical assistance and to establish a stable international financing system. Market access, elimination by the developed countries of obstacles to trade, debt relief and increased flows of private capital should help the developing countries mobilize the resources needed to eliminate poverty. Lastly, a conducive environment would help them achieve sustained growth rates and thereby enable them to mobilize domestic resources to fight poverty.

16. Effective operational activities for development presupposed assured, predictable and continuous financing. It was therefore essential that the funds and programmes of the United Nations system should increase their cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions and the regional banks so as to increase their complementarity and encourage sharing of tasks. Effectiveness would also depend on evaluation and follow-up of those activities and it would be necessary to strengthen the participation of national authorities of the countries concerned in those phases of the process.

17. The system had increased its humanitarian activities, including in regard to disaster and crisis situations. United Nations funds and programmes must provide the recipient countries with appropriate technical assistance for that purpose. The national authorities, for their part, had a crucial role to play in strengthening coordination and in all aspects of recovery.

18. Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries was an important factor in the search for solutions to current problems. It was therefore encouraging to see that trade among developing countries had increased. Indeed, interregional trade had increased in all developing regions thanks, inter alia, to the changes made to the regional agreements. Enhanced regional integration had contributed, in turn, to the increase in direct investment in the developing countries.

19. The Group of 77 and China had always believed that development problems should be approached in a manner that was respectful of the equality of the sexes, and they were pleased to see that that approach had been included in the rules and in project and programme formulation. They also reaffirmed their

support for operational activities for development, which they considered to be the key to economic and social development and to environmental protection.

20. **Ms. Szczepanski** (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated to the European Union — Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia — and the associated countries, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, wished to align themselves with her statement.

21. Securing a more predictable funding base for operational activities for development on the basis of effective performance by the United Nations system organizations remained a high priority. Efforts to enhance cooperation should be pursued and the European Union welcomed the importance attached to that in the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening of the United Nations system (A/57/387).

22. The European Union agreed with the conclusions of the report of the Secretary-General on pledging mechanisms to fund operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/57/332).

23. Firstly, the format of the Pledging Conference no longer served the purpose for which it had originally been intended, namely, increasing the resources for operational activities for development on a predictable, continuous and assured basis. Secondly, the introduction and continuous refinement of the multi-year funding frameworks (MYFFs) rendered the pledging event not only duplicative but also of limited value due to the latter's one-sided focus on resource mobilization as separate from results. Finally, the European Union agreed with the Secretary-General that the "peer pressure effect" had turned out to be a non-factor. For all those reasons, the European Union would again remain absent from the forthcoming Pledging Conference for Operational Activities for Development.

24. The European Union believed that the issue was not so much one of selecting the right venue for announcing financial contributions but rather of guiding the United Nations system organizations towards enhancing the efficiency of their activities at the field level, for demonstrated performance would weigh heavily when donors were making choices about allocating resources. The European Union supported the MYFFs and considered the latter an appropriate tool for engaging in substantive discussions of the linkage between funding for operational activities and results-based performance. Donors had responded positively to the introduction of MYFFs and the latter had potential for contributing to a predictable and sustained funding base and to simplification of procedures by the funds, programmes and agencies. The European Union therefore encouraged those organizations which had not yet done so to adopt such frameworks, for the latter would continue to be an important element in discussions on resource mobilization.

25. The European Union remained committed to supporting United Nations operational activities, including by providing financial support. However, she stressed that funding of operational activities could not be viewed in isolation from concrete results in the field, hence the need for enhanced use of the MYFFs within the United Nations system.

26. **Ms. Aalberg** (Norway) said that operational activities were key instruments in the global fight against poverty. That was why Norway channelled a large share of its development assistance through the United Nations and promoted a strong, efficient and financially sound operational arm. All development actors — including the United Nations — must review their activities to ensure the greatest possible contribution to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. Her delegation saw the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/57/387 as an important contribution in that regard.

27. In his report, the Secretary-General emphasized that United Nations efforts must be more closely coordinated in order to achieve better results. Coordination at Headquarters and in the field was the key to making the Organization more effective. The Secretary-General proposed, inter alia, that United Nations system agencies working in the same country should undertake joint programming and pool their resources at the country level.

28. Norway fully supported the proposals by the Secretary-General. It stood ready to contribute more than its normal share and had in fact been among the largest contributors to almost all United Nations funds and programmes for many years. Convinced that collective action yielded better results, it believed that all nations should contribute in line with their capacity, which was not the case today. It therefore urged all

partners that were in a position to do so to increase their contributions.

29. Her delegation believed that the Organization had made progress in defining its role in international cooperation for development. New and important challenges had emerged from the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. It was now important to ensure the follow-up and implementation of the triennial comprehensive policy review. United Nations operational activities must be based on nationally owned poverty reduction strategies. It was essential that human rights should be an integral part of global and national efforts to reduce poverty and prevent conflicts. Furthermore, experience had shown that enhanced coordination of humanitarian assistance and long-term development cooperation was needed in future operational activities.

30. Norway believed that the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) could play a strategic role in promoting gender equality in international development. It supported the recommendation encouraging close collaboration between UNIFEM and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in efforts to realize the Millennium Development Goals.

31. Her delegation considered the report of the Secretary-General on measures to promote and facilitate South-South cooperation (A/57/155) very important. The specific measures it contained should be examined carefully and regarded as a first step forward in revitalizing South-South cooperation.

32. Norway believed that the special session of the General Assembly on children was a milestone in efforts to realize the rights of the child. While the outcome document — *A World Fit for Children* — could have had a more explicit rights perspective and a stronger emphasis on the reproductive health of young people, it did nevertheless provide a comprehensive and forward-looking agenda and was considerably more rights-oriented than the 1990 outcome document. It now remained to ensure its follow-up based on renewed political will and the mobilization of resources at both the national and international levels. Of critical importance would be the participation in the follow-up of Governments and civil society in the countries concerned. The first step was to submit the outcome document to all the actors involved and, if necessary, requesting the establishment or strengthening of regional plans for its implementation.

33. **Mr. Hassan** (Pakistan) said that operational activities for development played an important role in promoting the Organization's goals. It was through its operational activities that the United Nations came into contact with the world's peoples, notably the inhabitants of remote villages. Those activities thus made a significant contribution to the development and strengthening of capacities in developing countries and were also a key component of the new partnership for development, as agreed at the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

34. United Nations operational activities had to overcome a number of challenges, the key one being lack of resources, which compromised their effectiveness. Core resources for development activities remained much lower than requirements, and overall expenditure in that area was stagnant, forcing significant cuts in development activities. In addition, the trend among donors was to pledge special-purpose funds at the expense of resources for core activities, compelling United Nations development agencies to alter their priorities to match donors' requirements.

35. The identification of priority themes by donors lent a dangerous, prescriptive aspect to development. Not only was there a risk that the development goals of an assistance programme driven by a donor rather than by recipients would be distorted, but such a programme was also likely to result in considerable waste. There was thus an urgent need to allocate sufficient funds for operational activities on a secure and predictable basis in order to optimize their role in the United Nations system as an instrument for realizing the goals of universal development and poverty alleviation.

36. He was surprised to see that the value of the annual United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, which had for more than 20 years been the lead mechanism for generating resources for operational activities, had come to be questioned. While there was, of course, always room for improvement, the positive aspects of the mechanism should not be ignored, since it was not only a fund-raising event but also a forum for Governments to pledge their political will in support of development. His delegation firmly believed that no funding strategy could ensure adequate funding without the political

will of Member States to support United Nations development activities.

37. Four years previously, the multi-year funding frameworks (MYFFs) had been launched with the hope that they would ensure provision of funds for operational activities on a more predictable, assured and continuous basis. It was expected that MYFFs would encourage donors to progressively increase their pledges, which unfortunately had not happened for a multitude of reasons. The problem was that the Organization was faced with a dilemma: the reduction in funds led to decreased effectiveness, which in turn was cited as a reason for further withholding of pledges. There was therefore no rationale for linking the decline in resources with the efficiency of the funding mechanisms.

38. With regard to pledging mechanisms, his delegation fully subscribed to the position taken by the Group of 77 and China, although it felt that the Committee should focus its deliberations on the core issue, namely how to increase the regular resources for operational activities. He looked forward to the next operational activities segment of the Economic and Social Council, which would deal with the issue. He also hoped that all donors would actively participate in the next United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities.

39. **Mr. Zagrekov** (Russian Federation) said that United Nations operational activities were a key factor in implementing the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration. The results of operational activities and the guarantee of the universal, neutral and unconditional nature of those activities would depend on the presence of adequate core resources, and it was most important to mobilize such resources more effectively. However, it should be noted that the annual Pledging Conference had become increasingly ineffective and no longer performed as expected. That was the conclusion to be drawn from the convincing facts and observations contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/57/332). His delegation believed that the recommendations contained in that document concerning pledging mechanisms were justified and deserved careful attention. At the same time, it was noteworthy that operational funds and programmes had done a good job in mobilizing resources, particularly by introducing results-based reporting, adopting multi-year funding frameworks and organizing their own pledging events. The result had been an increase in contributions, in particular to the budget of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). His delegation trusted that the current trend would continue, ultimately improving the general funding of operational activities. Work must continue on enhancing long-term funding mechanisms and finding an optimal formula for pledging events.

40. His delegation attached great importance to the strengthening of economic and technical cooperation among developing countries. The Secretary-General's recommendations on South-South cooperation pointed in the right direction. With regard to the recommendations on the establishment of a partnership with the private sector and scientific research institutions in the South and with regional development banks, donors and institutions in the North, his delegation regarded as very promising the triangular cooperation arrangements concluded in the TCDC framework that involved the participation of countries with economies in transition.

41. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) said that Bangladesh attached great importance to the role of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in bringing a positive change in women's lives in the developing countries. The Secretary-General's note on the Fund's activities (A/57/125) revealed, among other things, the Fund's financial situation, which was a critical issue for Bangladesh in that it wanted to see the Fund achieve all its objectives. Although he welcomed the fact that core resources had grown and that seven donors had increased their contributions, he considered the growth to be modest in comparison to the set targets.

42. As for South-South cooperation, his delegation commended the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries (TCDC) for the report on measures to promote and facilitate South-South cooperation (A/57/155), which traced the evolution of South-South cooperation over the past decade. Bangladesh broadly shared the report's conclusions and felt that some of the observations concerning reasons inhibiting further expansion of such cooperation at the global level were indeed noteworthy, including the lack of sufficient system-wide management and monitoring capabilities and the ad hoc approaches taken by United Nations agencies.

43. His delegation believed that an early implementation of the recommendations contained in

the report would be particularly beneficial to South-South cooperation. The report should have addressed the social aspect of the issue in greater detail, an aspect whose significance had been recognized by the participants at the South-South summit meeting held in 2000 and the Tenth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (in 2001). The developing countries had experimented with a number of innovative tools and mechanisms in the social sector. Bangladesh, for instance, took pride in using micro-credit as a tool for poverty eradication and the empowerment of women.

44. He stressed that the potential for South-South cooperation had not yet been fully measured. The return from cooperation in the social sector would be much higher than was currently assumed, and promoting South-South cooperation in that sphere would improve the lives of millions of impoverished people. It was therefore imperative for the United Nations system to focus more specifically on the social aspect of cooperation.

45. With regard to mechanisms to fund operational activities for development, his delegation regretted that the annual United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities had lost the support and active participation of most major donors; it pointed out, however, that most of the developing countries continued to make pledges. Noting that funds and programmes had gradually opted for multi-year funding frameworks (MYFFs), Bangladesh was prepared to consider other mechanisms that might replace the Conference. He stressed, however, that the annual United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities had a political value.

46. **Mr. Reddy** (India) said he wished to share with other Member States his delegation's thoughts on the current doctrine of development cooperation, namely the rights-based approach. India was often identified among the countries that had pioneered that approach to development, and it was therefore ironical that it should be discussing the limitations and fallacies inherent in the reigning orthodoxy.

47. For India, a rights-based approach to public policy was a moral imperative. The aims of social, economic and political justice and the principles of equality of status and opportunity were enshrined in the preamble to the Indian Constitution. The laws of his country sought to translate those commitments into reality; thus, it applied affirmative action in favour of women, the impoverished and the most vulnerable. India also sought to bring about equity in decision-making in relation to the development process and in the sharing of the fruits of development through local self-government and the delegation of powers to the village and municipal levels. Economic policies were directed not merely towards the objective of economic growth but also towards bringing about growth with equity, sustainable development and the fulfilment of basic needs. The central elements of that approach had been determined in 1950 when the Constitution had been adopted. They were conditioned to a large extent by India's experience with the colonial model of economic development. India had chosen at the time not to adopt a path of authoritative egalitarianism by which political and civil liberties would have been sacrificed for the promise of the fulfilment of physical needs. For India, the protection and promotion of fundamental rights and the empowerment of the people would remain a sacred duty.

48. India's achievements with regard to poverty eradication, despite the huge challenges which remained, had been impressive. It had learned from its development experience that normative and legalistic frameworks that addressed empowerment did not by themselves lead to poverty eradication. Poverty had inextricable linkages with resource endowment and with historical and geographical factors. Capacity-building and human resource development that addressed the human, physical and financial asset base of the poor were essential for poverty eradication.

49. As applied to development cooperation, the model sought to introduce a rights-based approach to public policy and bring about empowerment through the programming activities of donor agencies. It would obviously be very desirable to introduce such an approach to public policy, but it needed to come from within. Movement away from political, economic or social oppression could only be sustainable when it sprang from within a society and was in harmony with local culture and values. The rights-based approach to development cooperation sought to bring about empowerment through external pressure and was based on the unverified dogma that all that was required for poverty eradication was good leadership and the empowerment of ordinary people. That was a patronizing attitude, to say the least, as it was based on

the assumption that good governance was the only missing link between national poverty reduction intentions and actual poverty reduction. That approach illustrated the donor's supposed moral superiority with regard to what would be in the best interests of the South. It could even be somewhat insulting, because it was too often based on the premise that the people of the South elected leaders who were corrupt, uncaring and inefficient.

50. He challenged those premises. He was an elected member of the Indian Parliament, having spent 33 years as a legislator, and was currently in his fifth term. As a representative of 1.2 million Indian voters, he wondered why anyone could assume that the people of his country were simplistic in their views or unaware of their own best interests.

51. The rights-based approach to development cooperation also represented a practical problem. It was often found that such an approach sought to limit development cooperation to advice, advocacy and monitoring. Instead of meeting basic needs, developing human resources and building capacities, it confined itself to the "registration of claims". Moving away from the technical assistance and capacity-building model to a human rights model was, in his view, to exercise the easy option. It did not by itself lead to the fulfilment of the economic, social and cultural rights of the poor.

52. India had always attached the highest importance to the ethical dimensions of public policy. That view applied to development cooperation as well. It was important to have moral clarity on questions as to who should take decisions about the direction in which a society should develop, who should determine its economic, social and cultural goals, who should decide the strategies to be used to achieve those goals and who should arbitrate on questions relating to the division of the burdens and the benefits of development. Should it be the donor agency abroad, or should it be the elected Government, which was both representative and accountable?

53. India was committed to the protection of human rights. It did not believe, however, that commitment to human rights should be introduced through the leverage of a donor agency. Development cooperation should address itself to upgrading the human, physical and financial asset base of the poor. That would be an invaluable contribution to the fulfilment of their human rights.

54. He had read with care the Secretary-General's report on pledging mechanisms (A/57/332). His delegation was not convinced by the arguments that had been advanced, and was in consultation with other members of the Group of 77 on the subject. The Pledging Conference should not be a means of exerting any kind of pressure. On the contrary, it should provide a clearly visible platform for reaffirming commitment to human rights and poverty eradication. He was, of course, aware that for many donors development assistance through United Nations operational activities constituted only a fraction of their commitment to the goal of poverty eradication. That did not detract from the utility of the Pledging Conference, which could also be useful in helping developing countries and the United Nations system to understand better the views of the donor community on the overall direction being taken by the funds and programmes of the United Nations.

55. **Ms. Balaguer Labrada** (Cuba) said that neo liberal globalization was exacerbating the inequalities and disparities between industrialized countries and developing countries. Cooperation between developing countries, particularly technical cooperation, was essential to help the countries of the South to confront the new global realities and to achieve sustainable development. However, notwithstanding the expertise and know-how of many countries of the South, technical and economic cooperation between developing countries could not entirely replace North-South cooperation.

56. In numerous cases, it had not been possible to implement projects owing to the lack of resources available for South-South cooperation, as had been emphasized at the South Summit, held in Havana in 2000. However, despite the economic war waged against it for almost 40 years, Cuba was collaborating with dozens of countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly in the health, agriculture and education sectors. Cuba had developed a health aid programme for Central American countries affected by hurricane Mitch and had established the Latin American School of Medical Sciences, which admitted thousands of young Latin American students.

57. Cuba had requested the circulation under the agenda item entitled "Operational activities for

development", of a letter it had sent to the Administrator of UNDP Mr. Mark Malloch Brown (A/C.2/57/3) to inform him of its objections to the information contained in the *Human Development Report 2002* and the methodology used to produce it. While the report was supposed to be independent, it was in fact UNDP that promoted, published, funded and launched it. As a result, one would expect it to be based on reliable, objective and impartial information. However, the previous report had not included information for Cuba on the very important issue of science and technology, two areas in which considerable strides had been made, and had only contained information on the poverty index. The main theme of the 2002 report was democracy, an issue far too controversial for such a report, since no precise definition or single, internationally accepted, model of democracy existed, still less any indicators for quantifying it.

58. The report lacked seriousness and scientific and political rigour. Indeed, it was selective, discriminatory and partial. It was essential to consult universal, reliable, recognized and impartial sources, preferably those of the United Nations system. She asked how the World Bank could provide reliable data on Cuba, which was not even a member of that institution, and how the *Human Development Report* could contain information submitted by Freedom House, which claimed to be a non-governmental organization, although its structure, funding and activities were those of an agency of the United States Government and its special services aimed at engaging in anti-Cuban propaganda and smuggling agents onto the island.

59. Member States, which financed the activities of the Human Development Report Office, should have a genuine influence on the report published each year. The time had come to put an end to the informal consultations, which did not take account of their concerns. It was Member States that should decide on the report's main theme and revise the methodology used to produce it, for only then could it constitute a source of reliable and objective information.

60. **Mr. Chave** (Switzerland) welcomed the implementation of a programme of work for the simplification and harmonization of the rules and procedures applicable to the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities and the revision of the guidelines for the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. He was convinced that such improvements would strengthen the foundation for the effective implementation of United Nations system operational activities.

61. His delegation was concerned, however, that contributions to operational activities for development of the United Nations system depended not only on the success of the United Nations agencies responsible for development in terms of concrete results, but also on various factors external to those organizations and outside their immediate sphere of influence. While the International Development Association (IDA) had regularly succeeded in mobilizing significant additional resources, the United Nations system as a whole had only benefited from very modest increases. Switzerland supported a multilateral development system with a balanced multipolar architecture in which each element could fully play its role. In order to achieve that, all parts of the system must be adequately financed.

62. His delegation considered the current pledging mechanism to be ineffective and inadequate. It would support new mechanisms that incorporated the positive aspects of the current arrangements. A series of pledging sessions could be convened in the context of the multi-year funding frameworks, as was already the case for UNICEF, and the joint meetings of the executive boards of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP on the occasion of their first regular session. That would enable all partners to review the funding situation of core United Nations operational activities in a comprehensive manner and to pledge future contributions to the core agencies of the United Nations Development Group and other United Nations development organizations.

63. In addition, events should be introduced comparable to those of the Development Committee of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, specifically, ministerial-level meetings on United Nations operational activities, including their funding situation, the main aim being to increase the visibility of and strengthen the political commitment to the United Nations development system as a whole and its individual bodies. Such events could be held in conjunction with the triennial comprehensive policy review as high-level plenary meetings at the opening of the General Assembly. During the intermediate years, the Economic and Social Council could be mandated to devote an agenda item to the funding situation of the

United Nations system in the context of its high-level segment thematic debate.

64. **Mr. Al-Haddad** (Yemen) stressed the need to devote more resources to the United Nations funds and programmes in order to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, in particular those set out in the Millennium Declaration.

65. United Nations development agencies must focus their activities at the field level in accordance with the priorities of the developing countries concerned to ensure that operational activities were global and voluntary and sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of those countries.

66. The report of the Secretary-General on pledging mechanisms (A/57/332) presented options alternative to the current modality of the annual pledging conference, which took place during the regular session of the General Assembly. It had been pointed out that that process was not effective in terms of participation by donor countries, performance assessment and the use of funds.

67. The fundamental problem in that regard related to the inadequacy of and decline in resources devoted to development. The report stressed the need to ensure the effectiveness of multi-year funding frameworks so that the Pledging Conference could remain a way of informing members about their financial commitments. Pledging should have political value since it could draw the attention of policy makers, media and interest groups of both donors and recipient countries.

68. The report on measures to promote and facilitate South-South cooperation (A/57/155) presented an overview of the progress made towards achieving economic, political and social equity. The decisions taken at the Caracas meetings at the South Summit in Havana and the Tehran Consensus underlined the need to strengthen economic and technical cooperation among developing countries in the context of major transformations in the world. The United Nations system should step up its efforts to contribute to the establishment in developing countries of institutions that were more competitive at the international level and capable of reducing the economic divide, making better use of technical expertise and acquiring modern information and communication technologies. Cooperation should enable developing countries to achieve the two strategic objectives, namely, self-reliance and greater participation in the world economy.

69. The Report of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) on its activities highlighted the progress made by the Fund in the areas of capacity-building, partnerships, piloting innovative projects and advocacy. However, efforts must be stepped up in order to further enhance the front-line role of women in society, particularly in the areas of leadership to shape governance and build peace and participation in reconstruction efforts in countries emerging from conflict. Those objectives reflected donors' wishes and were in conformity with the multi-year funding frameworks. His delegation supported the initiatives adopted in that context.

70. The strengthening of partnerships with United Nations bodies in order to combat AIDS and study the participation of women in peacekeeping operations and their promotion in general terms was also crucial. To that end, the necessary resources must be guaranteed in order to enable the Fund to carry out its work.

71. **Ms. Nghifindaka** (Namibia) said that her delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. With reference to the report of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) on its activities, she said that Namibia attached great importance to gender issues and the work of UNIFEM. She welcomed the progress made, particularly in the areas of strengthening women's economic rights, women's leadership to shape governance and peace-building and the promotion of their fundamental rights and the elimination of violence against women.

72. Her delegation was pleased to note the significant progress made in the area of gender mainstreaming at both the national and regional levels, particularly through the participation of UNIFEM in the United Nations Development Group, common country assessments and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks.

73. Thanks to its expertise and experience, UNIFEM had made valuable contributions to various United Nations conferences and summits, inter alia the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In

order to fulfil its extensive mandate, UNIFEM must have adequate resources at its disposal. Her delegation encouraged UNIFEM to continue mobilizing resources and urged donor countries to provide increased funding.

74. **Ms. Viotti** (Brazil), speaking on behalf of the members of MERCOSUR (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) and the associated countries (Bolivia and Chile), observed that 2002 had been marked by clear indications that the international community should prioritize development in order to promote a better standard of living for everyone. However, failure to implement agreed instruments, on account of a lack of political will, was undermining their effectiveness. Developing countries were faced with a contradictory situation: significant progress had been made in respect of the necessary policies and measures but there were no resources to implement them.

75. Nonetheless, by responding to the priorities identified by States themselves, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes had been able to play an effective role in the area of development. Their activities must be increasingly geared towards technical support in order to strengthen institutional capacities and towards the development of human resources. To that end, making use, to the extent possible, of national experts and means for the execution of operational activities would make it possible to better integrate economic and technical cooperation.

76. The Brazilian delegation was happy to note that the resource downtrend was beginning to reverse itself, notably in the case of UNDP, but the efforts to increase core resources must be continued in order to preserve the universal character of the operational activities of the United Nations and to ensure that the system had a flexible tool for attaining the objectives agreed upon at the big conferences.

77. It was essential to improve international technical cooperation for development and to promote the links between the United Nations and the World Bank. Brazil was in favour of the use of innovative analytical tools such as the *Human Development Report* and believed that the United Nations funds and programmes, especially UNDP, should make good use of the data drawn from their considerable experience in the development field, much of which could be better disseminated by means of South-South cooperation. The results might be all the more convincing if that cooperation enjoyed an input of financial resources and technical support from the developed countries as well as assistance from within the United Nations system. As the Secretary-General's report (A/57/155) emphasized, more systematic efforts were needed in order to take full advantage of the potential of the United Nations system to support South-South cooperation. It was therefore necessary, in addition to the initiatives, to disseminate a culture which encouraged the countries themselves to take action, with the assistance of the local offices of the funds and programmes of the United Nations system.

78. **Mr. Kogda** (Burkina Faso) said that, one year on from the triennial review of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, the moment had come to take action to increase public assistance for human development and poverty eradication. The international community had decided to reinforce the impact of operational activities by augmenting core resources to meet the growing needs of the developing countries. A concerted mobilization of resources was needed in order to help the countries recipients of the programmes to cope better with the economic and social effects of globalization, integrate themselves in the world economy, accelerate their economic growth and development, and reduce their poverty. That was the justification of the new concept of development introduced by United Nations agencies and institutions with the aid of the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which must be coherent, complementary and appropriate instruments. The point was to use them to inject greater coherence into United Nations programmes of assistance to countries in order to help the countries to build up their capacity to formulate, programme, implement and evaluate the projects and to make better use of technical cooperation. In Burkina Faso the process was a participatory and dynamic one. The common country assessment had facilitated a common understanding of the country's problems, needs and priorities and had led to a better definition of the United Nations development-assistance goals and strategies. UNDAF had helped to draw several lessons from recent cooperation.

79. Coordination, whose advantages and indeed absolute necessity everyone sang, was never delivered happily; technical ministries usually feared losing their

powers, and donors felt frustrated by the dispersal of their activities to the benefit of whoever was responsible for the coordination. The dispersal of the resources of some projects as a result of an overly ambitious definition of the area of intervention was another weakness of operational activities. The lack of national capacity to formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate programmes had an adverse effect on the results. Those shortcomings must be corrected if the impact of operational activities was to be strengthened. There was also a need to revitalize the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and boost funding contributions. It was against that background that Burkina Faso welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on pledging mechanisms (A/57/332).

80. Operational activities for development were vital for the least developed countries, for they facilitated access to core social services and helped to meet the essential needs of the poorest. That was why the United Nations must preserve its advantages in that field by carrying out activities targeted on results.

81. The special session on children had pointed the way to creation of a world worthy of children. It was a question inter alia of providing children with a better and healthier existence and high-quality education and of protecting them against maltreatment, exploitation, violence and AIDS. Time was short, for 300 million children were suffering hunger and two million died every year from water-borne diseases. Accordingly, no time must be wasted on discussion of the procedures for follow-up of the special session. All United Nations bodies were capable of taking a grip on children's problems and proposing solutions.

82. **Mr. Gerus** (Belarus) recalled that the triennial policy review of operational activities for development had been undertaken at the fifty-sixth session; General Assembly resolution 56/201 reaffirmed the fundamental aspects of operational activities and defined the main elements aimed at adjusting the policies of the Organization in that area. He welcomed the progress made during the previous year in accordance with resolution 56/201 and supported the complementary measures taken to implement that important resolution, which were spelled out in Economic and Social Council resolution 2002/29. He particularly supported the activities conducted to deal with the effects of globalization.

83. Implementation of the provisions in the various sections of the resolution would strengthen the positive trends noted in recent years in respect of reform of operational activities and enhance their effectiveness. The volume of cooperation between the United Nations system — excluding the World Bank Group — and the developing countries had been increasing for several years. During the past year, that cooperation had reached a record $7.7 billion, up 17 per cent from in 2000. Contributions to UNDP had also increased, to $2.6 billion, up 9 per cent from the previous year. Contributions to the UNDP regular budget had increased by 3 per cent, to $652 million, reversing the steady decline of the past eight years. Aside from the difficulties of financing the regular budget and despite the clear growth in the amount of resources mobilized, there had not yet been a genuine breakthrough in that respect. Extrabudgetary resources continued to have a predominant role in operational activities. He urged the organs of the system on operational activities for development and their partners to focus their efforts on finding the necessary financial resources and on upholding the fundamental universal, impartial and professional nature of the United Nations system with respect to the use of those resources.

84. Joint UNDP/UNICEF programming must be strengthened, and new instruments, including the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, must be used to that end. That should produce better results in operational activities in keeping with the spirit of resolution 56/201, namely, to assist developing countries. Those two instruments were used to evaluate the needs of the different countries and to better plan the activities of the United Nations in those countries. They would be useful only if they were based on national priorities established with the participation of the Governments concerned.

85. The introduction of the common country assessment and the Framework had nevertheless revealed some shortcomings. In section IV of resolution 56/201, which dealt with the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the General Assembly had recommended that certain fundamental principles be applied when drafting the documents in question. Unfortunately, those instruments were being prepared by the United Nations mission in the recipient country, on the basis of existing instructions some of

them drawn up a long time ago, without taking into account the provisions of resolution 56/201. As the revised guidelines had not entered into force until May 2002, some of the draft common country assessments did not entirely meet the criteria of the resolution. Implementation of the internal instructions must therefore be stepped up.

86. His delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on pledging mechanisms (A/57/332). There was a need to consider new funding modalities, because the pledging conferences were no longer achieving their purpose. His delegation stood ready to consider the question of launching high-level events, in the framework of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, in which a wide range of international organizations dealing with the financing of assistance would be invited to participate.

87. His delegation welcomed the impetus given to cooperation between Belarus and the United Nations; cooperation between UNDP and Belarus from 2001 to 2004 had focused on specific projects. His Government also welcomed the UNICEF Executive Board's approval of the 2003-2005 UNICEF programme for Belarus.

88. Finally, he drew the attention of UNDP, UNICEF and other United Nations agencies to the report on the humanitarian consequences of the Chernobyl disaster (A/56/447) and the need to implement the measures contained in that report, including mobilization of sufficient financial resources.

89. **Ms. Oh** Hyun-joo (Republic of Korea) agreed with other delegations that it was necessary to reform the funding mechanism that was based on the annual pledging conference. The various solutions proposed in the Secretary-General's report on the subject (A/57/332) should therefore be studied. She noted that the difficulty for her Government was that the national budget cycle did not correspond to the budget cycle of pledging conferences. Any new method should draw on the various proposals put forward concerning funding modalities. Her delegation supported the principle of multi-year funding frameworks, which were still not universally accepted. In any event, funding methods should be predictable and stable and contain no surprises. Such modalities would lead the various organizations to take a multi-year approach to their programming.

90. The General Assembly should therefore seriously consider adopting a different method from the current one. Her Government was in favour of holding a series of pledging events. It should also be possible to make pledges for operational activities outside the multi-year funding framework. That might give them more visibility and revitalize political support for operational activities. Her Government believed that the other proposals contained in the report should also be carefully considered. For example, one meeting of the operational activities segment of the Economic and Social Council might be devoted to the advantages and drawbacks of each proposal. In conclusion, she said that her Government was committed to operational activities and expressed the hope that a better funding mechanism would be put in place and that a solution to the problem would be found during the current session.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.